

Muhammadi Named Best Goalkeeper, Abbasi Wins MVP at Futsal Asian Cup Thailand



TEHRAN – Bagher Muhammadi's rock solid performances for Iran in the AFC Futsal Asian Cup Thailand 2024 saw him claim the

Best Goalkeeper Award. The custodian displayed fine form throughout the tournament, which saw Iran claim a record-

extending 13th title. Muhammadi was also instrumental in the final against Thailand, limiting the hosts to one goal in Iran's 4-1 win. Mohammadi's teammate Saeid Ahmad Abbasi was also named the competition's MVP and best goalscorer with eight goals. Saeid Ahmad Abbasi's dazzling performances saw him named the Most Valuable Player and win the Yili Top Scorer Award at the event. The forward, whose eight goals and one assist led Iran to its 13th title, edging out compatriot Mahdi Karimi (five goals), Iraq's Salim Faisal (five goals) and Tareq Zeyad on four goals. Ahmad Abbasi picked up the

award after helping Iran beat Thailand in the final, having been in sterling form throughout the tournament. In the final, Ahmad Abbasi added his eighth goal with a classy finish to cap off a fine performance. Ahmad Abbasi opened his Thailand 2024 account with a brace in Iran's 3-1 win over Afghanistan before scoring twice in victories against Bahrain (5-3) and Kuwait (4-0). The pivot, who plays his club futsal with Spanish outfit Valdepenas, then finished off a fine counter-attacking move to score Iran's fourth goal in their 6-1 win over Kyrgyzstan in the quarter-finals.

Iran's U-23 Chess Team Runner-Up in Asian Championship



TEHRAN – Iran's under-23 chess team has finished second at the 2024 Asian Cities Chess Championship held in Russia. The 2024 Asian Cities Chess Team Championship took place in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia from April 20-30. Iran's boy's chess team, con-

sisting of Bardiya Daneshvar, Sina Movahed, Abtin Atakhan, Kiyam Poormousavi, and Maoud Mossadeghpour, participated in the event. The boys' team secured second place with 16 points, while the girls' team ranked sixth with 9 points.

Battling Nadal Beats Cachin to Reach Madrid Open Fourth Round

MADRID (Reuters) - Rafael Nadal survived a second set wobble to defeat Pedro Cachin 6-1 6-7(5) 6-3 in the Madrid Open third round on Monday. Nadal, who beat 10th seed Alex de Minaur in the second round, held his nerve as he was tested by the 91st-ranked Argentine, who won his maiden ATP title at the 2023 Swiss Open. "Some moments good, some moments not good, but I found a way," the 37-year-old Nadal said. Cachin struggled against his powerful forehand in the first set as the Spaniard broke twice to take a 5-1 lead before the match was temporarily paused with a spectator feeling un-



Spain's Rafael Nadal looks at the ball against Argentina's Pedro Cachin during the third round of the 2024 ATP Tour Madrid Open tournament tennis match at Caja Magica in Madrid on April 29, 2024.

well. When play resumed, the five-times Madrid champion broke again to win the set.

Cachin started the second on a better note, taking a 4-1 lead helped by some fine cross-court backhands and, though Nadal broke twice to make it 5-5, he claimed the set in the tiebreak. Both players broke early in the third, which stood at 2-2, but local favourite Nadal then broke twice more to emerge as the winner with the fans giving him a standing ovation. "Day by day... playing in front of this crowd means everything to me," said the 22-times Grand Slam champion. Nadal next faces Czech Jiri Lehecka, who beat Brazilian qualifier Thiago Monteiro 6-4 7-6(7) to reach the fourth round.

Spain Hire Del Bosque to Supervise Football Federation



Former Spain coach Vicente Del Bosque

MADRID (AFP) – Former Spain coach Vicente del Bosque will lead the committee overseeing the country's scandal-hit football federation, the Spanish government said Tuesday. The retired 73-year-old led La Roja to the 2010 World Cup and 2012 European Championship titles, as well as taking Real Madrid to two Champions League triumphs. "I'm proud to announce that the person presiding over the committee and representing it... is Vicente del Bosque," said Pilar Alegria, the minister for Education and Sports. "Del Bosque will be the face and representation of Spanish football." Last week Spain's National Sports Council (CSD) created a committee to "oversee" the federation (RFEF) and try to pull it out of crisis. Former president Luis Rubiales resigned in disgrace after forcibly kissing Women's World Cup star Jenni Hermoso last year, while he and new president Pedro Rocha are under investigation in a graft probe.

"I believe that (Del Bosque) is the clearest representation of a good person of great human quality and, above all, an example of honesty and respect," added Alegria. The RFEF took decisions "beyond its remit" after Rubiales stepped down in December according to a report from the country's leading sports court, resulting in the CSD creating the committee. World and European football governing bodies FIFA and UEFA subsequently issued a statement expressing "great concern" at the situation around the RFEF. "FIFA and UEFA will seek additional information to assess the extent to which the CSD's appointment (of the committee) ... may affect the RFEF's obligation to manage its affairs independently and without undue government interference," they said. Spain is due to host the 2030 World Cup along with Portugal and Morocco.

Lewandowski Hat-Trick Leads Barca to 4-2 Win Over Valencia



Barcelona's Polish forward #09 Robert Lewandowski (center) fights for the ball with Valencia's Spanish defender #03 Cristhian Mosquera during the Spanish league football match between FC Barcelona and Valencia CF at the Estadi Olimpic Lluis Companys in Barcelona on April 29, 2024.

BARCELONA (Reuters) - Barcelona striker Robert Lewandowski scored a hat-trick in the second half to help his side fight back to claim a hard-fought 4-2 win on Monday over visitors Valencia, who were leading 2-1 when they were reduced to 10 men just before the break. With five games remaining, Barca moved back to second in LaLiga

on 73 points as they leapfrogged surprise package Girona, who are third with 71. Those two teams will meet in a Catalonia derby on Saturday which could decide a top-two LaLiga finish and a place in the Spanish Super Cup. Barcelona's win postponed for a couple of weeks Real Madrid's almost inevitable LaLiga title celebrations as Carlo Ancelotti's side sit atop the standings on 84 points. Valencia stay eighth on 47 points, two points behind Real Betis and four off Real Sociedad in the battle for a European qualifying spot. In Barca's first game since boss Xavi Hernandez said he was reversing his decision to step down at the end of the season, they struggled on a wet surface after heavy rain turned the match into a frantic tussle marked by goalkeeping mis-

takes. The visitors wasted a sitter from close-range through Peter Federico early and then allowed Fermin Lopez to head home from a Raphinha cross to put Barca in front after 22 minutes. But Valencia's Hugo Duro struck in the 27th, taking advantage of an error by keeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen who tried to chip a clearance from the edge of the box but instead gifted the ball for the striker to equalize into the empty net. Another mistake by Barca's defense 11 minutes later saw Ronald Araujo bundle over Federico and Pepelu converted the penalty to give the visitors the lead.

EU Legal Adviser: Some FIFA Player Transfer Rules May Breach EU Law

BRUSSELS (AP) — FIFA rules on transfers can conflict with European Union legislation relating to competition and freedom of movement because they limit possibilities for players to change clubs, and for clubs to hire, a senior EU legal adviser said on Tuesday. Advocate General Maciej Szpunar gave his opinion after French soccer player Lassana Diarra legally challenged FIFA rules. The Diarra case went through FIFA judicial bodies before the 2016 election of FIFA president Gianni Infantino, who has made it a priority to modernize transfer market rules.

Former France international Diarra signed a four-year contract with Lokomotiv Moscow in 2013. The deal was terminated a year later after Diarra was unhappy with alleged pay cuts. Lokomotiv Moscow applied to the FIFA dispute resolution chamber for compensation and the player submitted a counterclaim seeking compensation for unpaid wages. The Court of Arbitration for Sport found the Russian club terminated the contract with Diarra "with just cause" and the player was condemned to pay 10.5 million euros (\$11.2 million).

The former Real Madrid player also argued that a potential deal with Belgian club Charleroi fell through because of the FIFA rules, and sued FIFA and the Belgian federation at a Belgian court for damages and loss of earnings of six million euros (\$7 million). Szpunar proposed the European Court of Justice should reply to the questions referred by the Belgian tribunal "by finding that the FIFA rules governing contractual relations between players and clubs may prove to be contrary to the European rules on competition and freedom of movement of persons."

Celtics Top Miami Heat to Take a 3-1 Lead in East

MIAMI (AP) — Derrick White scored a career-high 38 points, Jayson Tatum added 20 points and 10 rebounds, and the Boston Celtics beat the Miami Heat 102-88 on Monday night to take a 3-1 lead in their Eastern Conference first-round series. Jaylen Brown scored 17 points and Jrue Holiday had 11 for the top-seeded Celtics, who lost Kristaps Porzingis in the first half to what the team said was a right calf injury. Boston won at Miami for the sixth straight time and improved to 14-3 in their last 17 games on the Heat's home floor. Bam Adebayo finished with 25 points, 17 rebounds and five assists for Miami, which had a sell-out crowd — including Lionel Messi — but played again without injured starters Jimmy Butler



Boston Celtics guard Derrick White (9) dribbles as Miami Heat center Bam Adebayo (13) defends during the second half of Game 4 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series, Monday, April 29, 2024, in Miami.

(knee) and Terry Rozier (neck). The Heat managed only 84 points on offense in Game 4. Tyler Herro scored 19 points and Caleb Martin had 18 for the eighth-seeded Heat. The Celtics can advance to the second round on Wednesday when they host Game 5. The Boston-Miami winner will meet the Cleveland-Orlando winner in the East semifinals; that Cavaliers-Magic series won't end until at least Friday.